

# Definition of Intervener Services and Interveners in Educational Settings Technical Report

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National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness 2.0



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## Definition and Roles

Based on the discussion and suggestions outlined in this document, definitions of terms and clarifications of roles are proposed for intervener services in educational settings. It is important to note that these (a) are consistent with the role of interveners described by Alsop, Blaha, and Kloos (2000, p. 7), (b) incorporate additional concepts identified through extensive review of existing definitions and documents, and (c) include feedback gathered through a multifaceted input process used by the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness in response to a request from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs for the implementation of *Recommendations for Improving Intervener Services* (NCDB, 2012a).

### **Intervener Services and Intervenors in Educational Settings: Definition**

Intervenors, through the provision of intervener services, provide access to information and communication and facilitate the development of social and emotional well-being for children who are deaf-blind. In educational environments<sup>1</sup>, intervener services are provided by an individual, typically a paraeducator, who has received specialized training in deaf-blindness and the process of intervention. An intervener provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is deaf-blind (age 3 through 21) throughout the instructional day.

Working under the guidance and direction of a student's classroom teacher or another individual responsible for ensuring the implementation of the student's IEP, an intervener's primary roles are to:

- provide consistent access to instruction and environmental information that is usually gained by typical students through vision and hearing, but that is unavailable or incomplete to an individual who is deaf-blind;
- provide access to and/or assist in the development and use of receptive and expressive communication skills;
- facilitate the development and maintenance of trusting, interactive relationships that promote social and emotional well-being; and,
- provide support to help a student form relationships with others and increase social connections and participation in activities.

### **Teaming**

An intervener does not work in isolation. Instead, he or she:

- participates as an active member of the student's educational team,
- attends and participates in IEP meetings,
- attends regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the teacher and other team members,
- is actively supervised and supported by the classroom teacher and other professionals responsible for the child's IEP, and
- receives ongoing support from professional educators with expertise in deaf-blindness.

**Training**

In the absence of specific state standards to the contrary, training programs should comprehensively model the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC's) "Specialization Knowledge and Skill Set for Paraeducators Who Are Interveners for Individuals with Deaf-Blindness." These standards should be used by all programs that train paraeducators to be interveners.

<sup>1</sup> Although this definition focuses on intervener services in educational settings for students 3-21, it is important to note that interveners also provide services to individuals in early intervention and community settings.

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

### **Background**

In recognition of the challenges faced by states and schools in providing intervener services for children who are deaf-blind, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) asked the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) to (a) collect information about current intervener services across the country and, based on this information, (b) develop recommendations for improving national, state, and local intervener services. To do so, NCDB employed a multifaceted input process, which included interviews, surveys, and facilitated discussions with stakeholders representing families, teachers, administrators, higher education personnel, and interveners.

As a result of this process, NCDB identified and forwarded to OSEP ten recommendations designed to achieve four specific goals: (a) increasing the recognition and appropriate use of intervener services, (b) ensuring training and support of interveners, (c) building family support and capacity related to intervener services, and (d) sustaining high quality intervener services. The recommendations also include implementation strategies that detail steps to achieve the goals.

### **The Purpose of This Document**

This document has been developed to inform thinking in response to a key implementation strategy in *Recommendations for Improving Intervener Services* (NCDB, 2012a, p. 6) formulated by NCDB for OSEP. Specifically, it targets promotion of the recognition and appropriate use of intervener services. The goal, recommendation, and strategy read as follows:

*Goal 1:* Increase recognition and appropriate use of intervener services for children and youth who are deaf-blind.

*Recommendation 1:* Develop a coordinated and expanded national approach to provide state and local early intervention and education agencies with information and tools needed to understand and use intervener services.

*Implementation Strategy:* Develop and disseminate a consistently applied national definition of intervener services, including clarification of the occupational role of the intervener.

The full text of NCDB's *Recommendations for Improving Intervener Services* may be found at <http://intervenors.nationaldb.org>.

### **What are Intervener Services in Educational Settings?**

In order to begin planning the achievement of the above goal, it is important to have a clear understanding of the concept of intervener services in educational settings and the need for skilled interveners to deliver them. Deaf-blindness causes profound sensory deprivation. It creates a "disability of access" to visual and auditory information about the environment (people, things, events) that is an obstacle for learning, communication, and development (Alsop, Robinson, Goehl, Lace, Belote, Rodriguez-Gil al., 2007, p.1). Without consistent and responsive specialized support, environmental information and concepts are distorted, incomplete, and confusing to children with deaf-blindness, who have limited or no means to predict events or communicate their needs. Children with deaf-blindness struggle to learn from the typical

formative experiences that children with vision and hearing experience and access incidentally. Without a sense of safety and the ability to trust that others will respond to their needs, readiness to learn is compromised for most children, and their potential to achieve is limited.

Quality intervener services, when provided by a skilled intervener, can facilitate a child's access to environmental information, support the development and use of communication, and promote social and emotional well-being (Alsop, Blaha, and Kloos., 2000, p.3-7). Interveners provide access to sensory information that would otherwise be unavailable to children whose vision and hearing are severely limited or absent. They enable children to become aware of what is occurring around them, attach language and meaning to all experiences, and minimize the effects of multisensory deprivation; and they empower them to have control over their lives (Henderson & Killoran, 1995, p. 3).

When defining what intervener services and interveners are, it is also important to identify what they are not. An intervener is not a teacher, an expert in deaf-blind education, or an individual who assumes primary responsibility for the student's education. Nor is the provision of intervener services a panacea for surmounting challenges inherent in educating a child who is deaf-blind. Rather, intervener services are one of a variety of critical individualized supports that may be needed for children who are deaf-blind. Interveners work closely with other team members, and they need ongoing leadership and support from teachers of children who are deaf-blind and other experts in deaf-blindness.

### **Current Challenges**

There is broad agreement in the field of deaf-blindness that interveners provide a valuable service option, in both school and community settings, for many children and youth who are deaf-blind. High-quality intervener services provided by a well-trained intervener are often necessary to ensure an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, and intervener services can play a critical role in providing access to the general curriculum for many children and youth.

Unfortunately, there is a widespread lack of awareness of intervener services and of the role of interveners in many school districts and an insufficient number of trained interveners. Currently, only a very small percentage of children who are deaf-blind receive intervener services and, in many states, these services are provided under a different name. This lack of consistency is confusing to families and educators alike. Additionally, the scope and quality of services vary significantly from state to state and from school district to school district. It is clear that children and youth who are deaf-blind would be better served if partner stakeholders—including families, NCDB, state deaf-blind projects, universities, researchers, schools, and early intervention programs—would systematically collaborate in a nationwide effort to promote intervener services wherever they are needed.

### **Definition and Use of the Term Intervener**

A number of state deaf-blind projects, ad hoc groups from the National Intervener Task Force facilitated by the SKI-HI Institute at Utah State University, and other organizations have produced publications and products over the past decade that define and describe the role of interveners. These publications, along with findings from the NCDB intervener services stakeholder process described above, indicate that there is good conceptual agreement among the

state deaf-blind projects and other entities familiar with deaf-blindness about what intervener services are and the role of the intervener. However, there remain subtle variations in key terms and concepts within these definitions. This lack of consistency creates confusion and contributes to a lack of understanding and recognition of intervener services among families and educational personnel.

In its data collection activities, NCDB described an intervener as an “individual” who has received specialized training to assist children who are deaf-blind by:

- facilitating access to environmental information,
- supporting their development and use of communication skills, and
- promoting their social and emotional well-being by maintaining a trusting and interactive relationship.

This definition, originally published by Alsop, Blaha, and Kloos (2000, p. 3-7), was used in the 2008 U.S. Department of Education *Federal Register* notice inviting applications for the currently funded state deaf-blind projects. The notice also stated that the definition described “paraprofessionals who serve as interveners” (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In surveys conducted by NCDB in late 2011 and early 2012, 100% of administrator respondents, 91% of parent/guardian respondents, and 86% of state deaf-blind project personnel respondents agreed that the aforementioned definition was consistent with their understanding of an intervener (NCDB, 2012b). However, many respondents provided comments indicating that the definition should be clarified further despite this high level of overall agreement (92%). Survey respondents suggested the following additions to the definition:

- a description of the type of training an intervener should receive,
- inclusion of the term *paraprofessional* (as in the 2008 *Federal Register* notice),
- use of the term *in-depth training*, rather than just *training*, and
- language indicating specifically that an intervener:
  - provides direct support to the student,
  - functions as part of a team,
  - modifies educational materials and concepts,
  - provides access to social interaction,
  - facilitates connections with others in his or her environment,
  - is assigned to one student, not to the classroom,
  - attends meetings about the student,
  - does not do common paraprofessional tasks such as bus duty, and
  - is credentialed by the National Resource Center on Paraeducators.

Although current definitions and descriptions typically refer to the occupational role of intervener, the NCDB recommendations use the term *intervener services* to promote consistency

with the concept of related services, as described in IDEA, and to emphasize that intervener services are one of a number of specific educational services that a student with deaf-blindness (age 3 through 21) may require in order to receive a free and appropriate public education.

### **Unanswered Questions**

Several critical questions arise when defining interveners and intervener services:

1. Is an intervener a professional or a paraprofessional?
2. Do interveners serve on a student's educational team?
3. Is the role of an intervener the same as that of other paraeducators?
4. How much and what type of training does an individual need in order to be considered an intervener?

These questions highlight issues that are often cited as challenges in the development of a more systematic approach to the provision of intervener services.

The remainder of this document attempts to answer these questions and begin the process of developing and disseminating a consistently applied national definition of intervener services. Appendix A lists the wide range of materials that were reviewed in preparation for the following discussion. These reports and other materials were developed by a variety of entities that include: (a) state deaf-blind projects, (b) ad hoc committees associated with the National Intervener Task Force, (c) the website Intervener.org housed at the SKI-HI Institute, (d) institutes of higher education, and (e) NCDB and its predecessor, the National Technical Assistance Consortium for Children and Young Adults Who are Deaf-Blind (NTAC).

Although an attempt is made to discuss each of the following questions separately, they are interrelated and a discussion of a comprehensive definition of intervener services and the occupational role of interveners involves attention to all simultaneously.

**Question 1: Is an Intervener a Professional or Paraprofessional?** (Note: For the purposes of this document, no difference is made between the terms *paraprofessional* and *paraeducator*).

### **Discussion**

One of the most frequently asked questions about interveners relates to their employment status within education agencies. That is, is an intervener a professional or a paraprofessional? In May 2012, NCDB asked state deaf-blind projects if their states had education administrative rules addressing or defining interveners or intervener services. Thirty-nine responded that they had no such rules, and nine did not respond to the request for information. Only two—Indiana and Utah—reported that the term *intervener* is used in their current education administrative codes. With respect to how the term is defined, the Utah administrative code includes *communication intervener* as a related service. Agency materials describe the communication intervener as a paraeducator. In contrast, the Indiana State Special Education Rules (Title 511 Article 7, Rules 32–47, 2008) simply refer to an intervener as an individual. No other specific state *education* agency (SEA) legislation, regulations, or personnel standards appear to have been developed for interveners to date, although the Texas Administrative Code has identified qualifications and training requirements for interveners related to intervener services provided by the Texas Department of *Aging and Disability Services* as part of a Medicaid waiver program.

The National Intervener Task Force definition refers to an intervener as an individual (Alsop, Miller, Belote, & Zambone, 2009). The definition on Intervener.org, otherwise identical to the Task Force definition, refers to an intervener as a person. Materials developed and disseminated by state deaf-blind projects in Arizona, California, Florida, Texas, and Utah typically include either paraprofessional or paraeducator in their definitions. Only Minnesota's definition refers to an intervener as a professional.

The status of interveners as a discipline continues to evolve. Many advocate for its inclusion as a related service in the next reauthorization of IDEA and support the establishment of state personnel standards related to interveners. Currently, given the absence of intervener services as a recognized discipline or as a related service within IDEA, there is no specific federal policy that can be used for guidance. Guidance may be drawn, however, from literature related to the training of interveners.

In 2009, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recognized the role of the intervener through its adoption and publication of a specific set of professional standards and ethics for interveners in "Specialization Knowledge and Skill Set for Paraeducators Who Are Intervenors for Individuals with Deaf-Blindness." Published in *What Every Special Educator Must Know*, CEC establishes a comprehensive set of professional and paraeducator standards that "provide benchmarks to states, provinces, and nations for developing or revising policy and procedures for program accreditation, entry-level licensure, professional practice, and continuing professional growth" (CEC, 2009, pp. xi, 195–201). In addition to the deaf-blind specific standards, CEC further states that all paraeducators working with individuals with exceptional learning needs should have mastered, at a minimum, the Paraeducator Common Core and appropriate specialization knowledge and skills. The National Resource Center for Paraeducators currently offers a credential based on these deaf-blind specific standards.

### **Suggested Action**

In an NCDB survey of interveners, several respondents self-identified as a family member, teacher, or nurse. So, while it is acknowledged that in some instances family members and professionals may serve as interveners for children who are deaf-blind, given current CEC standards related to paraeducators who are interveners and the lack of current federal guidance or specific state standards to the contrary, it is suggested that the following statement be incorporated into the definition: "Intervener services are provided by an intervener, typically a paraeducator."

### **Question 2: Is the Role of an Intervener the Same as That of Other Paraeducators?**

#### **Discussion**

There is less confusion regarding the role of interveners, and the role described in the work by Alsop, Blaha, and Kloos is the most frequently included in the definitions reviewed for this report (2000, p. 7). Accordingly, the primary role of the intervener is to:

- facilitate the access of environmental information,
- facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication, and



- develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship that can promote social and emotional development and well being.

What is less clear, in school settings, are the similarities and differences between a designated intervener and a traditional classroom paraprofessional. In practice, the role of the intervener differs from that of a classroom aide (see Minnesota Low Incidence Projects, 2009). Interveners provide consistent, direct one-to-one support to a single student who is deaf-blind throughout the instructional day. In contrast, classroom paraprofessionals are typically assigned to a group of students and often carry out non-instructional tasks such as attendance-taking or setting up for lunch that do not require them to be directly engaged with students. In addition, the instructional day may be split between traditional paraprofessionals (for example, with one serving in the morning and another in the afternoon) who may typically remain assigned to the same classroom over a period of years. However, a single intervener provides services to a single student throughout the instructional day and may follow the student through the years. Interveners provide services to help bridge relationships with others, to increase social connections and participation, and to increase communication partners. As such, an intervener requires specific training to prevent a student's becoming over-reliant or dependent on him or her and to avoid fostering learned helplessness in the student. When interveners do change, a transition period should be allowed for the student and both interveners working with him or her. Alsop and colleagues identified a variety of areas in which these differences are apparent, including assignments, training, classroom maintenance, team involvement, attendance at meetings, and additional school duties (Alsop et al., 2007, p. 5). These are summarized as follows:

### *Comparison of Interveners and Paraprofessionals*

<b>Intervener</b>	<b>Paraprofessional</b>
Works under the direction of the classroom teacher (regardless of supervisory funding source)	Works under the direction of the classroom teacher
Abides by district or agency policies	Abides by district or agency policies
Assigned to work one-to-one with a student who is deaf-blind	Usually works with groups of students but can work one-to-one when assigned by the teacher
Must have specialized training in deaf-blindness	Typically does not receive disability-specific training
Has skills in deafblind intervention including: communication methods, environmental access, sensory loss, deaf-blind instructional strategies, and how to promote independence rather than dependence	Has varying levels of skills dependent on assignment, experience, and training
In coordination with the teacher, prepares materials for the one student who is deaf-blind with whom he/she works	As assigned by the teacher, responsible for materials preparation for the entire class (e.g., copying, cutting, activity preparation)
Not assigned to do classroom maintenance because of the continuous one-to-one time required by the student with deaf-blindness	As assigned by the teacher, responsible for classroom maintenance (e.g., bulletin boards, setting up and cleaning up materials)
Usually attends regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the teacher and other team members	Typically does not attend planning meetings
Participates as an active member of the student's team, including attendance at IEP meetings, in order to contribute valuable day-to-day knowledge of the student	Generally does not attend IEP meetings
Not generally assigned to additional school duties because of one-to-one time required by the student	May be assigned to additional school duties such as lunchroom, bus, playground, etc.
Facilitates the student's connection to others by explaining and modeling the student's specific communication system, acting as a bridge to the world, and creating a safe, supportive environment that encourages successful interactions	Typically is not required to facilitate communication connections between students and others

### **Suggested Action**

It is suggested that the role definition described by Alsop, Blaha, and Kloos (2000) continue to serve as the conceptual basis for it and that it be expanded to read that the primary role of the intervener is to:

- provide consistent access to instruction and environmental information that is usually gained through vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to an individual who is deaf-blind;
- provide access to and/or assist in the development and use of receptive and expressive communication skills;
- facilitate the development and maintenance of trusting, interactive relationships that promote social and emotional well-being; and
- provide support to help a student form relationships with others and increase social connections and participation.

It is also suggested that the following item clarifying the provision of one-to-one support be added:

- provide consistent one-to-one, support to a student who is deaf-blind (age 3 through 21) throughout the instructional day.

### **Question 3: How Much and What Type of Training Does an Individual Require to Become an Intervener?**

#### **Discussion**

Little if any federal or state policy or guidance exists regarding the extent of training required for an intervener to function effectively. However, two pieces of federal legislation do detail specific requirements for paraprofessionals: IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997; 2004), and NCLB, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (see U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

IDEA regulations specifically allow “paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation or written policy . . . to be used . . . in the provision of special education and related services . . . to children with disabilities” (IDEA Section 300, Part B, 300.156/b/3).

NCLB requires special education paraprofessionals working in designated settings (e.g., Title 1 schools) to meet one of the following three legislated standards (Wallace, n.d.):

1. to have at least two years of study at an institution of higher education, or
2. to hold an Associate’s degree, or
3. to meet a rigorous standard of quality, as demonstrated through a local or state assessment, related to their ability to assist in teaching reading, writing, and mathematics.

Throughout the definitions of interveners used by state deaf-blind projects, there are numerous references to “trained individuals” with “specialized in-depth training in deaf-blindness” and “specialized skills related to deaf-blindness,” yet little is stated about the specific content and/or length of this training. Although several of the projects indicate that they provide training themselves, how or whether this training relates to or comprehensively incorporates CEC’s published standards or local or state personnel standards is not typically outlined or discussed.

There are currently two university-based intervener training programs (Utah State University and East Carolina University), and both are consistent with CEC standards. The National Resource Center for Paraeducators (NRCP) provides a credential for those completing the Utah State University intervener training program. In addition, the relationship of USU’s program to specific local and state personnel standards is being initiated in the Utah Paraprofessional Consortium. East Carolina University is currently pursuing NRCP credentialing for those who complete its intervener training program. As more states develop standards for interveners that are consistent with NCLB’s higher education requirements and as the emphasis on highly qualified paraprofessionals/paraeducators increases, it is apparent that additional higher education programs will be needed.

### **Suggested Action**

It is recommended that the phrase “specialized training in deaf-blindness and the process of intervention” be included in the definition of intervener.

Given the lack of federal or specific state standards to the contrary, it is also recommended that training programs be based upon and adhere closely to the CEC “Specialization Knowledge and Skill Set for Paraeducators Who Are Interveners for Individuals with Deaf-Blindness” (CEC, 2009, pp. 195–201). These standards should be used by all programs that train paraeducators to be interveners. Interveners should also meet the paraeducator standards established by their state and have any appropriate child-specific training, that is, training individualized to meet the needs of students to whom they are assigned (e.g., training in tactile signing, ASL, Braille, etc.).

Furthermore, we recommend that states initiate the development of local and state policies and procedures to determine the standards, extent of training, training program requirements, and documentation (e.g., certificate, credential, or license) required for interveners in their states, consistent with IDEA regulations and state policy related to paraprofessionals.

### **Question 4: Do Interveners Serve on a Student’s Educational Team?**

#### **Discussion**

Inherent in IDEA and special education practice is the importance of a team approach in the education of children with disabilities. This concept is consistent with the extant literature related to special education, as well as reinforced throughout the reviewed materials, which consistently describe an intervener as (a) working under the supervision of a classroom teacher, (b) part of a student’s IEP team, and (c) a participant in the IEP process. However, as the number of students who are deaf-blind and being served in inclusive and general education settings continues to increase, the term *classroom teacher* may no longer accurately describe the teacher who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the student’s IEP or who has the specialized knowledge and skills to understand the modifications and adaptations needed for the student to access the general education curriculum.

In addition to working under the supervision of a classroom teacher or another professional, interveners need ongoing support from experts in deaf-blindness who can (a) provide coaching and close supervision to interveners who are early in their careers and enrolled in a training program, (b) help interveners acquire and maintain the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with particular children, and (c) provide ongoing mentorship and professional development. Although comprehensive initial training provides interveners with basic skills and knowledge, it is important to understand that interveners are neither teachers nor experts in deaf-blind education.

### **Suggested Action**

Based on this discussion, it is suggested that the following components be included in the definition to describe that an intervener:

- participates as an active member of the student’s educational team,
- attends and participates in IEP meetings,

- attends regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the teacher and other team members,
- is actively supervised and supported by the classroom teacher and other professionals responsible for the child's IEP, and
- receives ongoing support from professional educators with expertise in deaf-blindness.

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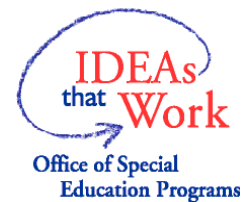
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# Appendix A

## Summary of Intervener Definitions, Roles, and Key Concepts

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H326T060002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Jo Ann McCann.



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Arizona Deaf-Blind Project					
<p><i>Intervener TEAM Training, Phase I: CORE Training. (2008). Arizona Deafblind Project: Tucson, AZ</i></p> <p><i>Selecting an Intervener for a Student Who Is Deafblind. (2007). Robinson, C. Arizona Deafblind Project: Tucson, AZ</i></p> <p><i>Arizona Intervener Team Training Program: Enduring Understandings for Deafblindness. (Undated), Arizona Deafblind Project: Tucson, AZ</i></p> <p>Retrieved on 10/20/2012 from <a href="http://www.nationaldb.org/dbp/sep2007.htm#">http://www.nationaldb.org/dbp/sep2007.htm#</a></p>					
Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
<p>An intervener is a <b>paraprofessional trained specifically in deafblindness</b> who works one-on-one with a child who has a combined vision and hearing loss</p> <p>... a <b>one-to-one paraprofessional</b>...</p>	<p>...<b>provide continual access to both information and communication</b> for their students...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate consistent <b>access to information</b> that is usually gained through vision or hearing,</li> <li>• <b>facilitate communication</b> skills, and</li> <li>• <b>maintain trusting interactive relationships</b> that promote social and emotional well-being (Alsop, Blaha, &amp; Kloos, 2000).</li> </ul> <p>The intervener provides consistent, ongoing, individualized information to the student to assist him/her in understanding the environment and the people in it, as well as educational content presented.... facilitates the development of the student’s communication, concepts, and skills across a wide range of functional, academic, and social areas.</p>	<p>The primary difference between a classroom aide assigned to work one-on-one with a student with combined vision and hearing loss and an intervener, is that <b>the intervener has comprehensive, specialized training in deafblindness.</b></p>	<p>... <b>paraprofessional ...one-to-one</b>...</p> <p>...there is a <b>significant difference between an intervener and a typical one-to-one special education paraprofessional</b>....</p> <p>... the intervener works with a student who is deafblind, and is expected to <b>receive specialized, in-depth training in deafblindness</b> and deafblind educational strategies....</p> <p>Therefore the term "intervener" is used <b>only for individuals working with students who are deafblind.</b></p>	<p>... is expected to receive <b>specialized, in-depth training in deafblindness</b> and deafblind educational strategies...</p> <p>The primary difference between a classroom aide assigned to work one-on-one with a student with combined vision and hearing loss and an intervener, is that <b>the intervener has comprehensive, specialized training in deafblindness.</b></p>	<p>A <b>team approach</b> is critical in the education of children who are deafblind...</p> <p>The intervener works <b>under the direction of the classroom teacher</b> and other service providers.</p>

## California Deaf-Blind Project

*CDBS announces the new intervener training initiative.* (2003). Belote, M., California Deaf-Blindness Services: San Francisco, CA.  
*Fact Sheet: The use of interveners.* (2003). Rodriguez-Gill, G. ,California Deaf-Blindness Services: San Francisco, CA.  
 Retrieved 10/29/2012 from <http://www.cadbs.org/articles-by-subject/interveners/>

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
An intervener is <i>a trained individual</i> who has <i>knowledge and skills</i> related to deaf-blindness; and provides <i>a one-to-one direct support</i> to a learner who is deaf-blind at school, home and in the community.	<p>The role of the intervener is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Facilitate access of environmental information</i> usually gained though vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to the individual who is deafblind;</li> <li>• <i>Facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication</i> skills by the individual who is deaf-blind;</li> <li>• <i>Develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship</i> that promotes social and emotional wellbeing (Alsop, L., Blaha, R., &amp; Kloos, E. (2000).</li> </ul>		...in California the position is usually called something else, such as <i>one on-one aide, paraprofessional, paraeducator, classroom assistant</i> , etc...	... is <i>a trained individual</i> who has <i>knowledge and skills</i> ...	... <i>team training</i> ...

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
	<p><b>What is the role of a deafblind intervener?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• links children, youth, and adults with deaf-blindness to the world so that they fully participate in their homes, schools and communities</li> <li>• communicates effectively so that these individuals can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) understand their world;</li> <li>b) anticipate and respond to events and expectations;</li> <li>c) build relationships with others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				

Indiana					
<i>State Special Education Rules.</i> (2008). Title 511 Article 7, Rules 32-47, Section 54 Retrieved on 12/20/2012 from <a href="http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/individualized-learning/art7.pdf">http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/individualized-learning/art7.pdf</a>					
Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
“Intervener” means an individual with knowledge and skill in the mode of communication of a student who is deaf-blind who can communicate to the student what is occurring in the educational setting.					

**Intervener.org (Developed and hosted by SKI HI Institute)**

*A Family's Guide to Interveners for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss.* (2012) Alsop, L., Berg, C., Hartman, V., Knapp, M., Lauger, K., Levasseur, C., Prouty, M., Prouty, S. SKI HI Institute, Utah State University, Logan, UT.

Retrieved 10/29/12 from <http://intervener.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/A-Familys-Guide-to-Interveners.pdf>

Definition	Role	"What an Intervener Isn't"	Key Concept "Who"	Key Concept "Training"	Key Concept "Teaming"
<p>An Intervener is a <b>person</b> who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works consistently <b>one-to-one</b> with an individual who is deafblind</li> <li>• Has <b>training and specialized skills</b> in deafblindness</li> </ul>	<p>The role of the intervener is to provide effective, deafblind specific intervention for a child with deafblindness in the three following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Access to Information</b></li> <li>• <b>Access to Communication</b></li> <li>• <b>Access to Social and Emotional wellbeing</b></li> </ul>		<p>...a person...</p>	<p>Has <b>training and specialized skills</b> in deafblindness</p>	<p>... works <b>under the direction</b> of the classroom teacher...</p> <p>...is a <b>member of child's IEP team</b>...</p> <p>... closely with <b>and supports other IEP team members</b>...</p>

National Intervener Task Force (Facilitated by SKI HI Institute)					
<p><i>Recommendations on the Training of Interveners for Students who are Deafblind.</i> (2004). Alsop, L., Killoran, J., Robinson, C., Durkel, J., Prouty, S. SKI HI Institute, Utah State University, Logan, UT.</p> <p>Retrieved 10/29/ 2012 from <a href="http://www.dblink.org/pdf/intervener-train.pdf">http://www.dblink.org/pdf/intervener-train.pdf</a></p>					
Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
<p>An intervener is defined as an individual who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works consistently <b>one-on-one</b> with a student who is deafblind.</li> <li>• Who has <b>training and specialized skills</b> related to deafblindness Alsop, L., Blaha, R., &amp; Kloos, E. (2000).</li> </ul>	<p>The role of the intervener is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitate access to environmental information</b> usually gained through vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to the individual who is deafblind.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication</b> skills by the individual who is deafblind.</li> <li>• <b>Develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship</b> that can promote social and emotional well-being</li> </ul> <p>(Alsop, L., Blaha, R., Kloos, E., 2000).</p>		<p>...an <b>individual</b>...</p>	<p>... <b>specialized training</b>...</p> <p>... address <b>a wide range of topics</b> needed to understand the characteristics of deafblindness, appropriate strategies...</p> <p>...the <b>specific needs</b> of the student...</p>	



## Minnesota Deaf-Blind Project

*Interveners in Minnesota for Students who are DeafBlind.* (2009). Minnesota Low Incidence Projects: St. Anthony MN  
Retrieved 11/7/2012 from <http://www.dbproject.mn.org/documents/DBIntervener.pdf>

*Intervener.* (2009). Minnesota Low Incidence Projects  
Retrieved 10/29/2012 from <http://www.dbproject.mn.org/interveners.html>

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
<p>The term “intervener” applies specifically to a <b><i>trained individual</i></b> who works <b><i>one-to-one</i></b>...</p> <p>An intervener is a <b><i>trained professional staff member</i></b> who works <b><i>one-on-one</i></b> with a child who is deafblind to provide critical connections to other people and the environment.</p>	<p>The primary roles of the intervener are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Facilitate the access of environmental information</i></b> usually gained through vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to the individual who is DeafBlind.</li> <li>• <b><i>Facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication</i></b> skills by the individual who is DeafBlind.</li> <li>• <b><i>Develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship</i></b> that can promote social and emotional well-being.</li> </ul>	<p>The role of the intervener is much different than that of a classroom aide or typical one-to-one paraeducator. An intervener enables a child who is deafblind to connect to the people and things around him or her. The intervener is the bridge to the world for the child who is deafblind.</p>	<p>...<b><i>trained individual</i></b>...</p> <p>...<b><i>a trained professional staff member</i></b> who works <b><i>one-on-one</i></b>...</p>	<p>... to a <b><i>trained individual</i></b> ...</p> <p>...the use of the title “intervener” to designate a person who has <b><i>training in specialized skills</i></b> related to deafblindness...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philosophy of Intervention and the role of the intervener;</li> <li>• Knowledge of vision and hearing and the impact of a combined loss on human development and learning;</li> <li>• Strategies to facilitate interactions with others;</li> <li>• Understanding of the impact of deafblindness on concept and skill development;</li> <li>• Strategies to encourage self-determination and independence;</li> <li>• Strategies for behavior support;</li> </ul>	<p><i>“in schools, the intervener is a member of a child’s individual education team along with teachers, other staff and parents”</i></p> <p>The clarification “in schools” is provided since the non-profit, DeafBlind Services Minnesota, provides interveners in the home and community.</p>

National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness					
<i>National Intervener Task Force: Definition.</i> (2012). Intervener Services Recommendations. National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness: Western Oregon University. Monmouth, OR. Retrieved on 10/29/2012 from <a href="http://interveners.nationaldb.org/documents/NCDB-Intervener-Services-Recommendations.pdf">http://interveners.nationaldb.org/documents/NCDB-Intervener-Services-Recommendations.pdf</a>					
Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
An intervener is defined as <i>an individual</i> who works consistently <i>one-to-one</i> with a student who is deaf-blind and has <i>training and specialized skills</i> related to deaf-blindness.			... <i>individual</i> who works consistently <i>one-to-one</i> ...	... <i>training and specialized skills</i> related to deaf-blindness...	

National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness					
<i>Recommendations for Improving Intervener Services</i> (2012), National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness Western Oregon University. Monmouth, OR. Retrieved on 10/20/2012 from <a href="http://interveners.nationaldb.org/documents/NCDB-Intervener-Services-Recommendations.pdf">http://interveners.nationaldb.org/documents/NCDB-Intervener-Services-Recommendations.pdf</a>					
Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
Intervener services are provided by an intervener, typically a <i>paraeducator</i> , who:  a) has <i>received specialized, in-depth training</i> in deaf-blindness and  b) <i>works one-to-one</i> with an infant, child, or youth who is deaf-blind.	...facilitate a child’s <i>access to environmental information</i> ,...  ...support the <i>development and use of communication</i> , and  ... <i>promote social and emotional well-being</i> ...  (Alsop, Blaha, & Kloos, 2000).	An intervener is <i>neither a teacher nor an expert</i> in deaf-blind education	... <i>paraeducator</i> ...  ... <i>works one-to-one</i> ...	... has <i>received specialized, in-depth training</i> in deaf-blindness and...	In school settings, the intervener serves as <i>a member of the student’s educational team</i> .

**The National Technical Assistance Consortium for Children and Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind (NTAC)**

*The Intervener for Children and Youth with Deafblindness in Early Intervention and Educational Settings.* (2000). Alsop, L., Blaha, R., & Kloos, E (Available from [intervener.org](http://www.intervener.org)., the SKI HI Institute and/or NCDB)  
Retrieved on 10/29/12 from <http://www.nationaldb.org/ISSelectedTopics.php?topicCatID=10>

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
The term “intervener” applies specifically to a <b>trained individual</b> who <b>works one-to-one</b> with a child or student who is deafblind in home, school, and community settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitate the access of environmental information</b> usually gained through vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to the individual who is deafblind.</li> <li>• <b>Facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication skills</b> by the individual who is deafblind.</li> <li>• <b>Develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship</b> that can promote social and emotional well-being.</li> </ul>	<p>...the intervener must <b><i>not be considered interchangeable</i></b> with other paraprofessionals...</p> <p>... <b><i>may not be pulled to perform other duties</i></b> (e.g., lunchroom supervision, bus duty, substituting for other aides or teachers who are absent)...</p>	<p><b><i>...one-to-one...</i></b></p> <p><b><i>...support with the same person...</i></b></p>	<p>Training should be provided at two levels...</p> <p><b><i>...instruction about deafblindness</i></b>, including the characteristics of vision and hearing loss, receptive and expressive communication, concept development, and learning.</p> <p>... training related to the <b><i>specific needs of the particular child</i></b> with whom the intervener works.</p> <p><b><i>More on training</i></b>... In those states where intervener training is occurring, it is being offered through various formats such as the following Workshops,, Conferences, Monthly Classes, Onsite Training Mentoring Networks, Distance Learning Programs</p>	<p><b><i>...do not work in isolation</i></b>, it is important that the chain of supervision be clear</p> <p>...as <b><i>directed by the team</i></b>...</p> <p>...should <b><i>attend all planning and IFSP or IEP</i></b> meetings</p>

**Presentation to Deaf-Blind PDM in Washington, D.C.**

*Interveners-What is Happening. (2009). Alsop, L., Miller, C., Belote, M., Zambone, A. Power Point Presentation*

Retrieved 11/7/2012 from [http://www.tacomunities.org/document/list/p/folder\\_5219%252Ffolder\\_5220](http://www.tacomunities.org/document/list/p/folder_5219%252Ffolder_5220)

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
<p>An intervener is defined <i>as an individual</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works <i>consistently one-on-one</i> with a student who is deafblind</li> <li>• Who has <i>training and specialized skills</i> related to deaf-blindness</li> </ul>	<p>The intervener:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates access to environmental information that is usually gained through vision and hearing, but which is unavailable or incomplete to the child who is deafblind.</li> <li>• Facilitates the development and/or use of the child’s receptive and expressive communication skills.</li> <li>• Maintains a trusting, interactive relationship with the child that promotes social and emotional development and well-being.</li> </ul>				

## Texas Deaf-Blind Project

*Determining the Need for an Intervener in Educational Settings. (2012). Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs. Austin, TX*

*Qualifications for an intervener (all levels) in the DB-MD Medicaid waiver. (2010). Texas School for the Blind & Visually Impaired Outreach Programs. Austin, TX*

Retrieved 10/29/2012 from <http://www.tsbvi.edu/deaf-blind-project/33-i4ntervener-resources>

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
An intervener is a <b>paraprofessional</b> who provides <b>direct support</b> to a student with deafblindness for all or part of the instructional day.	<p>... the primary role of the intervener is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>facilitate the access of environmental information</i></li> <li>• <i>facilitate the development and/or use of receptive and expressive communication</i></li> <li>• <i>develop and maintain a trusting, interactive relationship</i> that can promote</li> </ul> <p>(Alsop, L., Blaha, R., &amp; Kloos, E. (2000).</p>	An intervener <i>should never</i> carry out his/her duties independently...	An intervener is a...  ... <i>paraprofessional</i> ...  ... <i>trusted communication partner</i> ...	<p>...<i>training in communication methods and sensory accommodations</i>...</p> <p><i>Qualifications</i> are also identified in the Texas Medicaid waiver’s proposed rules</p>	<p><i>Teaming is essential</i> in the success of this model...</p> <p>... <i>functions as an integral part of the student’s instructional team</i>.</p> <p>...<i>collaborates with the student’s team</i> in implementing the student’s IEP.</p> <p><i>Classroom teachers and other professionals on the instructional team provide the supervision, direction, and support</i>...</p>

**U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs**

Overview information; technical assistance and dissemination to improve services and results for children with disabilities—state technical assistance projects to improve services and results for children who are deaf-blind; notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2008. Federal Register, 73(58), 15744–15750. Washington, D.C.

Retrieved 10/29/2012 from <http://interveners.nationaldb.org/documents/NCDB-Intervener-Services-Recommendations.pdf>

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
An <i>individual</i> who has received <i>specialized training</i> to assist children who are deaf-blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...<i>facilitating access to environmental information...</i></li> <li>• ...<i>supporting their development and use of communication skills...</i></li> <li>• ...<i>promoting their social and emotional well-being by maintaining a trusting and interactive relationship....</i></li> </ul> <p>(Alsop, Blaha, &amp; Kloos, 2000)</p>		... <i>individual...</i>	... <i>specialized training...</i>	

## Utah Deaf-Blind Project

*Utah Communication Intervener Roles and Responsibilities for Team*, Sampson, G, Buchannan, L. (2008). Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Deaf Blind Project Services: Ogden, Utah  
Retrieved on 12/20/2012 from <http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-800.htm#T7>

Definition	Role	“What an Intervener Isn’t	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
<p>Communication interveners are <b>para-professionals</b> who provide one-to-one support for children and youth with deafblindness.</p> <p>(5) Services for students who are deafblind:</p> <p>(a) deafblind consultant;</p> <p><b>(b) communication intervener</b> (Administrative Code [R277-800-7 (B)(5)(b) and (D)(1)(b)])</p> <p>Also listed as a related server in Utah State Special Education Rules</p>	<p>There are three main functions of the communication intervener:</p> <p><b>(a) to provide clear and consistent access to sensory information</b></p> <p><b>(b) to facilitate the development and use of communication</b></p> <p><b>(c) to support social interactions</b></p>	<p><i>...is not a health care, motor, speech, transportation or classroom aide...</i></p> <p><i>...nor is the communication intervener a respite provider...</i></p> <p><i>...does not initiate contact with families...</i></p>	<p><b>Para-professional</b> specifically referred to as a communication intervener.</p>	<p><i>...initial and on-going training activities...</i></p>	<p><i>...works under the direction</i> of the classroom teacher and a consultant....</p> <p><b>Daily in-class supervision</b> is provided by the classroom teacher.</p> <p>The communication intervener <b>may or may not be asked to participate in the IEP meeting</b>. Participation is per the LEA protocol/policy and invitation</p>



## Appendix B

### Summary of NCDB Definition of Intervener Services and Interveners and in Educational Settings

Summary of NCDB Definition of Intervener Services and Interveners and in Educational Settings				
Definition	Role	Key Concept “Who”	Key Concept “Training”	Key Concept “Teaming”
<p>Interveners, through the provision of intervener services, provide access to information and communication and facilitate the development of social and emotional well-being for children who are deaf-blind.</p> <p>In educational settings, intervener services are provided by an individual, typically a paraeducator, who has received specialized training in deaf-blindness and the process of intervention. An intervener provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is deaf-blind (age 3 through 21) throughout the instructional day.</p>	<p>Working under the guidance and direction of a student’s classroom teacher or another individual responsible for ensuring the implementation of the student’s IEP, an intervener’s primary roles are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide consistent access to instruction and environmental information that is usually gained by typical students through vision and hearing, but that is unavailable or incomplete to the individual who is deaf-blind;</li> <li>• provide access to and/or assist in the development and use of receptive and expressive communication skills by the individual who is deaf-blind;</li> <li>• facilitate the development and maintenance of trusting, interactive relationships that promote social and emotional well-being; and,</li> <li>• provide services support to help bridge a student form relationships with others, to and increase social connections and participation</li> </ul>	<p>Given current CEC standards related to paraeducators who are interveners and the lack of current federal guidance or specific state standards to the contrary NCDB’s definition states:</p> <p>“Intervener services are provided by an intervener, typically a paraeducator.”</p>	<p>In the absence of specific state standards to the contrary, training programs should comprehensively model the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC’s) “Specialization Knowledge and Skill Set for Paraeducators Who Are Interveners for Individuals with Deaf-Blindness” (2009, pp. 195–201). These standards should be used by all programs that train paraeducators to be interveners.</p>	<p>An intervener does not work in isolation. Instead, he or she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participates as an active member of the student’s educational team,</li> <li>• attends and participates in IEP meetings,</li> <li>• attends regularly scheduled planning and feedback meetings with the teacher and other team members,</li> <li>• is actively supervised and supported by the classroom teacher and other professionals responsible for the child’s IEP, and</li> <li>• receives ongoing support from professional educators with expertise in deaf-blindness.</li> </ul>

Reference: National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness 2.0. (2013). *Definition of Intervener Services and Interveners in Educational Settings*. Monmouth, OR: Western Oregon University, Teaching Research Institute.